



# Bureau of Land Management

Utah  
News

GRAND STAIRCASE-ESCALANTE NATIONAL MONUMENT  
669 SOUTH HWY 89A . KANAB, UT 84741  
PHONE (435) 644-1200 . FAX (435) 644-1250  
[HTTP://WWW.BLM.GOV/UT/ST/EN.HTML](http://www.blm.gov/ut/st/en.html)

For Immediate Release  
Date: June 3, 2014

Contact: Larry Crutchfield, (435)644-1209

## **BLM-Utah Releases Final Report on Little Valley Wash Oil Spill** *Increased monitoring program to protect Monument lands*

**Kanab, Utah**—The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) today released the final report on an oil spill in Little Valley Wash. The report found no immediate threats to wildlife, vegetation and water and recommended increased monitoring and additional staff training to protect this location within the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM). The report is available on the Monument website at: [www.ut.blm.gov/monument](http://www.ut.blm.gov/monument).

Little Valley Wash—and intermittent drainage southwest of Escalante, Utah—is downstream from the producing Upper Valley Unit oil field, which is located both on Forest Service and BLM-managed lands. Working in coordination with the Dixie National Forest, which manages the majority of these lands, and with representatives from the current field operator—Citation Oil & Gas Corporation—the BLM conducted field inspections with petroleum engineering technicians, natural resource specialists, geologists, botanists, biologists, and other experts in resource management to determine the extent and impacts of the spill.

According to the final report, at least three separate events—one recent leak and two decades-old spills—deposited substantial oil residues in the wash. The two older spills are estimated to have left a deposit of some 550 barrels of oil. The most recent leak, a small pipeline spill in December 2013 that was first reported by hikers on March 22, 2014, was probably less than 10 barrels of a mixture of mostly saline water with some oil.

The report concluded that the oily deposits, which are 54 stream-miles from the Escalante River, appear to be relatively stable and, if undisturbed, pose no immediate threat to wildlife, vegetation and water in the wash. An analysis of fresh water seeping over the older deposits in Little Valley Wash indicates that State of Utah surface water quality standards are met and the water poses no threat to wildlife.

“We will continue to monitor natural resource conditions in Little Valley Wash, paying particular attention to the quality of water flowing from seeps and the health of the native vegetation to determine if there is any long-term damage to natural resources,” said acting Monument manager Cynthia Staszak.

On April 1, 2014, the BLM-Utah issued a written order to Citation requiring the company to report any release or spill of any volume to BLM within 24 hours of the event, to be followed by a written report within 15 days. Prior to this order, Citation was not required to make oral or written reports for liquid spills of less than 10 barrels; Citation logged the December, 2013 pipeline leak and repair, meeting these requirements.

“We recognize the age of the field and the potential for future infrastructure failures. We will be working with Citation to conduct a thorough assessment of the Upper Valley oil field infrastructure—including pipelines and monitoring equipment—that could fail and lead to another spill event,” said Juan Palma, BLM-Utah State Director.

The BLM will also be asking Citation to prepare and implement a new surface use plan for the field. The new plan will be developed in consultation with the Dixie National Forest and BLM. The BLM and Citation will continue monitoring conditions in the Little Valley Wash, particularly water quality, native vegetation health and the stability of the oil deposits, and will be developing a contingency plan should the oil become remobilized or threaten Monument resources.

Cleaning up the Little Valley Wash spills without causing more extensive damage to resources in the narrow, boulder-choked wash presents a challenge. At present, the best option with the least impact to resources is to leave the deposits undisturbed and to rely on natural biodegradation.

Additional information and the final report can be found on the Monument’s website at [www.ut.blm.gov/monument](http://www.ut.blm.gov/monument).

The BLM manages more than 245 million acres of public land, the most of any Federal agency. This land, known as the National System of Public Lands, is primarily located in 12 Western states, including Alaska. The BLM also administers 700 million acres of sub-surface mineral estate throughout the nation. The BLM’s mission is to manage and conserve the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations under our mandate of multiple-use and sustained yield. In Fiscal Year 2013, the BLM generated \$4.7 billion in receipts from public lands.

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